

**REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS:  
ADVERTISING AGENCY SERVICES**  
Tourism Industry Recovery, II

**Proposals are due on or before 5:00 p.m. CDT on May 5, 2023**

**OBJECTIVE**

This RFP has been issued to seek qualified firms with a working knowledge of the tourism industry and who can demonstrate the necessary experience to produce messaging and ad design and provide placement strategy for our leisure travel market. Although we intend to contract with the person/company that best meets the qualifications to complete the scope of work, Visit Jackson may terminate the negotiations if they are unsuccessful in reaching an agreement on all matters, including the scope of work and cost.

Visit Jackson intends to contract with a qualified agency to support its continued recovery efforts stemming from the negative economic impacts of COVID-19. This contract will be funded through federal ARPA dollars for Mississippi Tourism Recovery, II.

*This RFP in no way commits Visit Jackson to award a contract, to pay any costs in preparation of a proposal, or to contract for the goods and/or services offered. Although Visit Jackson intends to contract with the person/company that best meets the qualifications to complete the scope of work, Visit Jackson may terminate the negotiations if they are unsuccessful in reaching an agreement on all matters, including the scope of work and cost.*

**SCOPE OF SERVICES**

Visit Jackson wishes to employ an outside agency to produce an overall creative strategy spanning at least 24 months, including destination marketing and messaging; design and creation of various collateral pieces, both for use as print and digital; and integrated marketing activities, including digital marketing, social media strategies, traditional print, broadcast media and others relevant components.

The agency should recommend an overall media creation and placement strategy to position Visit Jackson to visitors as an affordable and attractive open destination for those who enjoy traveling, specifically in its top drive markets. It will be imperative to ensure that this scope of services adheres to any changing public health guidelines and is conveyed in an informed manner.

The selected agency's responsibilities will include the following:

- Create campaigns for Jackson's visitor segments based on behavior and travel trends, including:
  - Short-form video (for commercial use)
  - Long-form video
  - Guides and brochures
  - Non-traditional marketing assets
- Create a portfolio of new marketing assets, including photography/videography, for use in promotional materials and sustainable travel campaigns.
  - Visit Jackson owns music, professional, and talent rights

- Manage and develop public relations strategies
- Develop a comprehensive media strategy targeting Jackson's visitor segments, including significant mediums such as digital, broadcast, print, and social media.
  - Execute contracts and provide creative assets to all mediums in the media strategy.
  - **Media placement fees must not exceed 8% online and 12% offline**
- Create and promote a local campaign highlighting restaurants and attractions.
- Execute in-market signage/kiosks at main attractions, hotels, venues, and high-trafficked city areas.
- Develop sales concepts & strategies to increase meeting and group business bookings, including, but not limited to:
  - facility guides
  - targeted campaigns
  - online profiles
  - FAM tours & sales missions
  - sports assessment

## **ABOUT VISIT JACKSON**

In 1983, the state legislature established the Jackson Convention & Visitors Bureau, now doing business as Visit Jackson. Senate Bill #3080 authorized the creation of Visit Jackson, identified its purpose, and provided funding by levying a 1% sales tax on hotels/motels and restaurants. These funds form the foundation on which Visit Jackson promotes Jackson as a tourist, group tour, trade show, and convention/meeting destination. Visit Jackson was awarded accreditation from the Destination Marketing Accreditation Program (DMAP) - first in 2012 and renewed in 2021 - and was the first accredited DMO in Mississippi. DMAP is an international accreditation program developed by Washington, DC-based Destinations International, which is the world's largest resource for official destination organizations, convention and visitors bureaus (CVBs), and tourism boards.

**DESTINATION WEBSITE:** WWW.VISITJACKSON.COM

## **DESTINATION BACKGROUND & STATE OF ECONOMY**

Jackson is centrally located and Mississippi's Capital City. Its population is approximately 180,000. The COVID-19 pandemic created significant disruption to businesses in the hospitality sector, including hotels, restaurants, and small businesses. Additionally, many tourist attractions experienced sharp declines in revenue and visitation.

## **TARGET AUDIENCE DETAILS**

The following is a snapshot of Jackson's visitor profile:

- Geographical/Location
  - Urban
  - Southern
- Interests
  - Culture
  - Authenticity
  - Education

## **AVAILABLE FUNDS**

**BUDGET:** Visit Jackson will fund this contract at a minimum of \$2 million. This budget is based on creative production, strategy execution, media planning, and placement (both online and offline), media placement fees, account management fees, and out-of-pocket expenses. This

budget will be implemented in phases up to three years, with year one requiring the most significant production. Visit Jackson reserves the right to adjust both the budget and related services.

**BILLING:** Visit Jackson limits invoicing to one invoice per month. Each invoice should be on letterhead from the selected agency and include the month(s) for which payment is due and the detail of work completed at the mutually agreed upon rate(s) or amount in the executed contract.

**NOTICE OF INTENT TO BID**

The Notice of Intent to Bid (**Attachment 1**) is non-binding; however, it ensures the receipt of all addenda related to this RFP. Proposals will be accepted only from applicants who submitted a Notice of Intent to Bid by **April 28, 2023**. Notice of Intent to Bid must be emailed by the deadline below with the subject line “**Intent to Bid: Advertising Agency Services**” to [jxnrfp23@visitjackson.com](mailto:jxnrfp23@visitjackson.com).

**OFFICIAL CONTACT**

Visit Jackson requests that the proposer designate one person to receive all communications for clarification and verification of information related to this proposal. Please identify this point of contact on the Notice of Intent to Bid Form (**Attachment 1**).

**TIMELINE**

This tentative timeline may be altered at any time at the discretion of Visit Jackson and will be funded through federal ARPA dollars for Mississippi Tourism Recovery, II.

RFP available to agencies	April 3, 2023
Final day to submit questions regarding this RFP	April 19, 2023, by 5:00 p.m. CDT
Questions Answered	April 24, 2023, by 5:00 p.m. CDT
Notice of Intent to Bid	April 28, 2023, by 5:00 p.m. CDT
<b>Proposals are due by 5:00 p.m. CDT.</b>	<b>May 5, 2023, by 5:00 p.m. CDT</b>
Proposals evaluated by RFP committee	May 8-9, 2023
Agencies under consideration may be interviewed. Follow-up interviews will be conducted during this time frame as needed.	May 18-19, 2023
Agency selected, and contract negotiations begin	May 22, 2023
Work begins	May 24, 2023

## **SUBMITTAL REQUIREMENTS & DELIVERABLES**

Your response to this RFP must be submitted in the following format and labeled accordingly:

**A. Statement of Qualifications** – Provide a written statement of your firm's qualifications for providing the work described in the Scope of Work.

**a. Two (2) pages or less**

**B. Tourism Experience** – Provide a written statement of your involvement in the tourism industry, specifically with DMO clients, measurement methodology, industry memberships, and resources.

**a. Two (2) pages or less**

**C. Organization, Ownership, and Management**

1. Name, mailing address, email address, and telephone of the entity contracted with and all trade names to be used.
2. Name, address, and telephone numbers of the organization's principal officers and other owners.

**D. Organization's Structure and Experience**

1. The company's organizational chart, including any subcontractors who will work with Visit Jackson.
2. The total number of employees includes full-time, part-time, and contract workers.
3. Staff demographic breakdown
4. A short history of the company, especially related to work in the tourism sector.
5. Summary of employees who will work on the account, including their name, title, a summary of their qualifications, and their central role in working with Visit Jackson.
6. Hours of operation that staff will be available and any satellite offices.
7. Experience as it relates to messaging, ad design, and placement strategy. There should be at most three relevant case studies, including project goals with measurable KPIs and results. Creative work should be included in each case study.

**A. Two (2) pages or fewer per case study**

**E. Client Information**

1. Current clients in declining order of annual billing.

**A. Top 10**

2. Name your two most recent past clients and the reason for termination.
3. Name any travel/tourism clients and their current status.

**F. Account Gain and Loss**

1. Indicate if the agency has had a contract terminated for non-performance over the last five years, with either litigation determining the agency at fault or no litigation due to inaction on the part of the organization.
2. List accounts gained over the last two years and why your organization was awarded the work.

**A. Less than two (2) pages**

3. Three current account references with contact names, email, and phone numbers.

**E. Conflict(s) of Interest** - The proposer must declare and provide details of any actual, potential, or perceived conflict(s) of interest.

**F. Certification Form** – Certification Form (**Attachment 2**) must be signed and accompany all RFP Response submissions.

**G. Budget** – Please provide line-item costs for creative production, strategy execution, media planning, and placement (both online and offline), media placement fees, account management fees, and out-of-pocket expenses. Note: Although Visit Jackson's fiscal year begins October 1 and ends September 30, please base your proposed budget for two 12-month periods starting June 1, 2023, through May 31, 2025. Please provide a budget proposal for the total of \$2 million.

**Note** – after the initial production costs for each project, Visit Jackson prefers a retainer-based billing plan for updates/revisions.

## **CONDITIONS OF PARTICIPATION**

1. Submittals in response to this request and respondents' participation in the process shall be at no cost or obligation to Visit Jackson. Visit Jackson reserves the right to, at any time, abandon or terminate its efforts to contract for any or all said services without any obligation to any respondent.
2. Responses to this request and other materials submitted shall become the property of Visit Jackson and will not be returned.
3. Respondent shall not contact any Visit Jackson personnel or staff after this request has been advertised, except to ask questions as specified below under "Respondent Questions." Such contact will be considered a cause for disqualification.
4. Visit Jackson may waive any informalities or minor defects or reject any and all submittals.
5. Visit Jackson reserves the right to reject any submittal if the evidence submitted by, or investigation of, such respondent demonstrates that such respondent or its subcontractors, in Visit Jackson's opinion, is not properly qualified to carry out the obligations of the Contract or to complete the Work contemplated therein.
6. All applicable laws, ordinances, and the rules and regulations of all governmental authorities having jurisdiction shall apply to the Contract throughout.
7. This Contract is being funded through a grant provided to Visit Jackson by the State of Mississippi as part of its ARPA State and Local Fiscal Relief Fund (SLFRF) allocation received from the U.S. Treasury Department. The SLFRF program places numerous obligations on recipients and sub-recipients, which flow down to successful respondents. Each respondent is cautioned to carefully review the *Supplemental Terms and Conditions*, which are a part of the sample contract, and to ensure that all responsibilities and obligations are adequately addressed.
8. By executing a signature on the submittal, the respondent certifies that:
  - a. Both the respondent and any of its team members are currently debarred from submitting proposals or entering into contracts issued by any political subdivision or agency of the State of Mississippi or the Federal Government.
  - b. No Federally appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid, by or on behalf of the respondent, to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a member of Congress in connection with the awarding of any Federal contract, the making of any Federal grant, the making of any Federal

loan, the entering into of any cooperative agreement, and the extension, continuation, renewal, amendment, or modification of any Federal contract, grant, loan, or cooperative agreement.

- c. If any funds other than Federally appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a member of Congress in connection with this Federal contract, grant, loan, or cooperative agreement, the respondent shall complete and submit Standard Form LLL, "Disclosure Form to Report Lobbying," in accordance with its instructions.

## **EVALUATION & SELECTION**

Visit Jackson will establish a committee to evaluate and rate all proposals based on the criteria prescribed (**Attachment 3**).

### **SELECTION PROCESS – STEP 1**

Proposals meeting all requirements of the RFP will be evaluated by a review committee and ranked based on the following selection criteria. Top agencies may be chosen for Step 2.

- Tourism Industry Experience [25%]
- Scope of Work & Budget Plan [50%]
- References [10%]
- Evaluation of Prior Work [15%]

### **SELECTION PROCESS – STEP 2**

Top agencies may be invited to present (in person) their suggested framework.

Presentations will be ranked by the following criteria:

- Agency's expertise in diverse but cohesive strategies for driving tourism demand [60%]
- Ability to illustrate return on investment for suggested strategies [25%]
- Suggestions to address current and forecasted traveler sentiment [15%]

### **SELECTION PROCESS – STEP 3**

A contract will be awarded to the organization whose proposal is determined to be the most advantageous to Visit Jackson, taking into consideration the criteria outlined in this RFP. Upon completing the selection process under this RFP, Visit Jackson will notify the winning proposer and all other proposers who were not selected. Visit Jackson's evaluations of proposals are confidential. As such, Visit Jackson cannot respond to any questions and/or requests for information about why a company was not selected.

After awarding the contract, the schedule will include a period of collaboration between Visit Jackson and the selected agency to define better, elaborate upon, and update the agency's final Scope of Work and General Terms and Conditions. For the selected agency, an employee will be designated as your contact and will coordinate any materials needed or questions answered with all other Visit Jackson employees.

## STANDARD CONTRACT

Following is a copy of Visit Jackson's standard contract template to be referenced for this proposal. By responding to this request, the respondent is asserting its intent to accept the terms and conditions contained therein unless exceptions to the contract are provided as part of the respondent's submittal.

## DELIVERY REQUIREMENTS

Please submit your responses in hard copy and electronic format. All proposals should include a clear, concise narrative. The proposal format is open to presentation style but must include the abovementioned items. It is advised, but not required, to submit seven printed proposals (7).

Printed submissions must be marked "**RFP: Advertising Agency Services**" and delivered to:

Visit Jackson  
c/o Michael Hogg  
308 E. Pearl Street  
Suite 301  
Jackson, MS 39201

Electronic submissions should be provided in PDF format and sent to [jxnrfp23@visitjackson.com](mailto:jxnrfp23@visitjackson.com) with the subject line: "RFP: Advertising Agency Services." Proposals may not be faxed.

Submittals received in any manner not explicitly set forth above shall not be accepted or considered. Submittals received after the deadline will not be considered. The respondent is responsible for ensuring that the submittal is received by the specified deadline. The delivery date and time will be recorded upon receipt. Visit Jackson will only be accountable for timely or complete responses due to mistakes or delays of the respondent or carrier used by the respondent or weather delays. A postmark will not be considered proof of timely submission.

## QUESTIONS

Note that all answers regarding questions and requests for clarification for this RFP will be responded to publicly, consistent with the schedule below, to ensure that all respondents have the same information.

Email name and title, with any questions, by April 19, 2023, at 5:00 p.m. CDT at [jxnrfp23@visitjackson.com](mailto:jxnrfp23@visitjackson.com). No calls, please.